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Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Communications Electronic Services Washington, DC 20250-1340 (202)720-4330

Letter No. 2632

October 15, 1993

TAKING AG ISSUES TO ASIA -- Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy is in China meeting with his counterpart in that country and with other high-level members of the Chinese government. Espy is the first Clinton Administration cabinet member to visit China. While in Beijing, Espy opened the Joint Working Group Meeting for the US - China Science and Technical Exchange Agreement. USDA is participating in 20 scientific exchanges with the People's Republic of China. Espy began his Asian trip October 9. In a series of meetings in Japan he met with government and business leaders. He is scheduled to return to the U.S. October 22. Asia is the largest regional market for U.S. farm exports. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

RURAL DEVELOPMENT FORUM -- At the Rural Development Forum conducted in Washington, D.C., October 8, USDA Secretary Mike Espy said, "Today's forum is an incredible opportunity for us to come together to take an earnest look at how we define the problems of rural development, what we have available as the range of solutions, and how we get the two together." The USDA forum brought together rural officials and residents from across the nation. Espy said USDA has three missions in rural development: to strengthen the rural infrastructure; to improve rural housing; and to promote and enhance rural business. As examples of change Espy cited two projects being developed at USDA, the National Rural Development Corps, and Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. **Contact: Jim Brownlee (202) 720-2091.**

EC PRODUCTION -- Crop production in the European Community is expected to register a decline this year. Production of wheat and coarse grains will fall slightly despite the reform of the EC's Common Agricultural Policy that include price cuts and set-aside programs. EC Oilseed output is expected to decline. Pork and poultry production is expected to increase, beef production will be down. Sugar production will likely return to normal after a record crop last year. Reform in the sugar sector was put off for another year. Lower prices and reduced crop production could contribute to a decline in EC farm income this year. **Contact: Michael Herlihy (202) 219-0620.**

AQUACULTURE -- Tighter supplies are expected to put upward pressure on catfish prices for both the farm and processor. Steady sales and higher prices continued through the first half of this year, raising gross farm revenue 16 percent above year ago totals. U.S. seafood landings last year were 9.6 billion pounds, the sixth consecutive record year. Unlike previous years, all the increase was from seafood for human consumption. The largest increases were for Pacific flounder, up 74 percent, and Pacific hake, up 121 percent. **Contact: David Harvey (202) 219-0085.**

GAIN IN HORTICULTURAL EXPORTS -- During the first ten months of fiscal year 1993 (October to July), the total value of U.S. horticultural exports was \$6 billion, 4 percent above the same period a year ago. **Contact: Frank Piason (202) 720-6590.**

AG REAL ESTATE TAXES -- A recent study by USDA's Economic Research Service shows that the average tax per acre levied on U.S. agricultural real estate was \$5.51 in 1991. Total agricultural real estate taxes were \$4.7 billion. Michigan had the highest average tax per \$100 of full market value at \$3.21. Delaware had the lowest, \$.09. The report, "Taxes on U.S. Agricultural Real Estate, 1890-1991," lists State-level estimates of agricultural real estate taxes since 1890, average taxes per acre for 1890-1991, and total taxes and taxes per \$100 of full market value. Cost is \$9.00 per copy and can be ordered toll free by dialing 1-800-999-6779. **Contact: Peter DeBraal (202) 219-0425.**

FARM POPULATION -- Latest figures from the Census Bureau show that the U.S. rural population totals 67.9 million people, one-quarter of the nation's population. The estimated number of people residing on farms in 1991 is 4.6 million, 1.9 percent of the total U.S. population and unchanged from the previous year. Nearly half of all persons residing on farms are located in the Midwest, 49 percent. The South has the largest number of residents living in rural areas, 85 million people or 43 percent of its population. Two-thirds of all farm managers and operators live on the farm. USDA will replace its report on farm population based on residence, and will issue "The Farm Entrepreneurial Population," which focuses on households that have at least one family member receiving farm income or was employed as a farm operator or manager. The most recent report counted 5.7 million Americans in the farm entrepreneurial population in 1990. **Contact: Laarni Dacquel (202) 219-0536.**

THE FAMILY FARM -- A recent report issued by USDA reveals that of the 2.1 million farms in 1987, only 6,000 were controlled by nonfamily corporations, and the number seems to be holding steady. Nonfamily corporate farms accounted for 1.3 percent of farmland and 6 percent of gross farm sales in 1987. The figures show that while some farms are organized as corporations, farms are still overwhelmingly controlled by families. **Contact: David Harrington (202) 219-0520.**

CANNED NUTRITION -- Fruits and vegetables are canned at the peak of ripeness, flavor and nutritional value. Improvements in canning technology have helped to preserve nutritional value and quality. Beth Reames, Extension nutritionist with Louisiana State University, says loss of nutrients occurs during preparation. She recommends cooking canned fruits and vegetables in the canned liquid to increase vitamin and mineral intake. Reames says microwaving vegetables is the least destructive cooking method. **Contact: Beth Reames (504) 388-6701.**

MEAT & POULTRY PSAs -- USDA is distributing a series of public service announcements on the new labels for safe handling of meat and poultry. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy is featured in a radio announcement. Darin and Vicki Detwiler of Bellingham, WA, whose son died in January due to E. coli, are also in an announcement. The PSAs are being mailed to 5,500 radio stations across the nation. The action is part of an effort to inform consumers about the labels and safe handling procedures. A printed announcement will be distributed to newspapers; educational packets are being mailed to restaurants, public health department and school nurses; and a videotape is being prepared for broadcast by stations throughout the nation. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1897 -- Why do some folks try so hard to save endangered species? **Brenda Curtis** examines the case of an endangered insect, the tiger beetle. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1379 -- When an insect is an endangered species; making rural life better; a legume for the road; going to bat for bats; eat that Jack O'Lantern. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1889 -- USDA News Highlights; 1994 rice program; a berry big breakthrough; farm integration; tobacco returns could shrink. (Weekly reel of news features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1642 -- Caribbean computer model; screwworm fly attractant; the Panamanian barrier; Screwworm DNA fingerprinting; controlling ticks on wildlife. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- Wednesday, October 20, U.S. ag outlook, farm trade update; Thursday, October 21, rice outlook, catfish processing; Friday, October 22, oil crops outlook, cattle on feed, livestock update; Monday, October 25, dairy outlook; Tuesday, October 26, crop & weather update; Wednesday, October 27, former ag secretaries speak about NAFTA; Thursday, October 28, world tobacco situation; Friday, October 29, ag prices; Monday, November 1, horticultural exports. These are the **USDA** reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.
Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on the new safe handling instructions for meat and poultry.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA chief meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on the latest weather and crop conditions. USDA World Board chairman **James Donald** on crop supplies, stocks and prices.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **Pat O'Leary** reports on the origins of the Jack O'Lantern. **Lynn Wyvill** reports about mulch mats.

EVERY OTHER WEEK -- **Agriculture Update** with anchors **Eric Parsons** and **Lori Spiczka**. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

SUDDEN DEATH SYNDROME...has hit portions of the soybean crop, says **Cyndi Young** (WTAX, Springfield, IL), contributing to the yield range of 40-60 bushels per acre. Wet weather has caused stock rot in corn, creating lodging problems, but corn is yielding 170-220 bushels. Cyndi says that although the weather was cold and wet at the Farm Progress Show, in Amana, IA, attendance was good.

A TOUGH ECONOMIC WINTER...confronts a lot of farmers, says **Roger Strom** (WCCO, Minneapolis, MN), and many good producers will go under when bank financing is needed for spring planting. Roger says the 14" above-average rainfall and numerous cloudy days affected crop development, leading 80% of producers in one county to enroll in the 0-92 program.

WINTER WHEAT PLANTING...is going well, says **Curt Shoemaker** (KFRM, Concordia, KS), but some fields remain wet. Late planted milo could be hurt if the freeze arrives on schedule. Curt says he's keeping busy, serving as farm director and the station's general manager.

Farm Broadcasters Letter



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PINTO BEAN HARVEST -- was devastated by a killer frost last month, says **Kelly Klaas** (KEZJ, Twin Falls, ID). Yields vary from single digit to high teens. Cool, wet weather delayed wheat, and producers are now doubling their efforts to get in both wheat and potatoes.

SATELLITE DISTRIBUTION...of programming is now underway for the Northern Broadcasting System, says **Taylor Brown** (Northern Ag Network, Billings, MT). The new uplink facility provides stations with clear quality sound. Northern recently celebrated its 18th year.

EXPANSION CONTINUES...says **Cindy Zimmerman** (Brownfield Network, Jefferson City, MO). Brownfield recently added 25 new affiliates in Indiana, and is growing larger in Nebraska. The 20-year old network now serves 187 stations in five states. In Iowa, Brownfield is cooperating with "Iowa Farmer Today," in Cedar Rapids, to market communications that combines three media: print, telephone and radio. The system allows companies to generate direct responses to their advertising. **Chuck Zimmerman** at the network has more information.

VIC POWELL *Vic Powell*
Electronic Services